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QUESTION OF THE VIOLATION OF HUMAN RIGHTS AND FUNDAMENTAL FREEDOMS IN ANY PART OF THE WORLD, WITH PARTICULAR REFERENCE TO COLONIAL AND OTHER DEPENDENT COUNTRIES AND TERRITORIES

Written statement submitted by the International Falcon Movement - Socialist Educational International, a non-governmental organization on the roster

The Secretary-General has received the following communication which is circulated in accordance with Economic and Social Council resolution 1296 (XLIV).

[1 February 1991]

Violations of human rights in Iran

1. In the world today the younger generation will play an important role in shaping the future of the world community. Noting the fact that children under 15 years of age comprise 50 per cent of Iran's population of 55 million, the International Falcon Movement - Socialist Educational International is deeply concerned about the living conditions and the plight of Iranian children.

2. Iranian children from all walks of life and of all ages, from infants to teenagers, are subjected to unbearable pressures and live under very harsh conditions. The rights of this large sector of Iranian society are being continuously and variously denied.

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3. Foremost of all forms of violations of children's rights is the execution of children, shot by the authorities as acts of revenge against their parents or elder members of their families, who are subjected to State persecution for their beliefs. Such children include Jalal Movahed Fakhr, Fatemeh Mesbah, Fatemeh Ne'emati and Siamak Beiramzadeh, who were executed at a very young age. Many others have been arrested in their childhood, spent long years in prison under torture only to be executed later as adolescents.

4. The list of names and details of 16,000 victims of political executions by the Islamic Republic of Iran, published by the People's Mojahedin Organization of Iran, contains a significant number of children and adolescents. This list includes the names of 5,000 people whose executions were confirmed by the public media of the Islamic Republic of Iran.

5. We, however, noted that a report published by Mr. Galindo Pohl, the United Nations Special Representative, falls short of condemning these executions, many of which involved children under 18 years of age whose executions had been clearly confirmed by the régime's official media.

6. Children are still in prison. In many cases, their mothers were pregnant at the time of arrest, and they were born in prison under very harsh conditions. In their short lives, these children have never seen the outside world. They have grown up in the prisons and torture centres of the Khomeini régime, and as a result they suffer from many psychological and physical illnesses. They are usually very frail and in some cases paralysed.

7. The torture of children in front of their parents and vice-versa is a common torture technique in the Islamic Republic of Iran. The authorities use this method as a means of psychological torture in order to break the resistance of the parents. Victims of such torture include a young girl named Settareh, who was born in prison and tortured before her parents, as a result of which she became partially paralysed. The authorities of the Islamic Republic of Iran finally released Settareh and she was given to relatives, but died a few days after her release.

8. Other instances include the case of Mr. Mohammad Zabeti's son, who was three years old when both his parents were killed by the Government's Guards. He was taken to prison, where he witnessed the torture of adult prisoners and was himself beaten by the Guards.

9. There are many other similar cases, including that of a five-year-old girl named Parvaneh, who was tortured in order to extract information from her about her mother's friends. Somayeh Taghavi, a nine-year-old girl, was used as a child labourer in prison. Soodabeh Sharifi was 13 years old when she witnessed the torture of her mother, Malek Taj Hakami. Roghieh Rezvanian was five months old when she was taken from her mother by the authorities to be brought up in the inhuman prison conditions and indoctrinated as a "supporter of the régime."

10. The International Falcon Movement - Socialist Educational International strongly believes that any report on the violation of human rights in Iran should clearly include and describe such outrageous cases of persecution of children.

11. In addition to such cases, in which children are directly subjected to execution and torture, the general State-sponsored repression in Iran affects the majority of the country's children. In schools, children are the subject of constant State propaganda and indoctrination. They are acquainted with terms such as hatred, revenge, death and war at very early stages. Outside of school, children are constantly exposed to sights which later affect their personalities, creating complexes, hatred and fear. They witness public hangings in the streets, stoning, whipping, amputations, and burning of political prisoners and non-political offenders.

12. On 30 January 1990 Agence France Presse (AFP) reported that in a Friday prayer ceremony, four fingers of the right hands of two Iranians were amputated in public. On 4 August 1990 the official Ettela'at daily reported that eight people were publicly hanged en masse in one of the central points of Isfahan. On 19 August 1990 the official Kayhan daily reported the public execution of a man in south Tehran (Shahre Ray). On the same day, another man was publicly executed in Arak. On 25 August 1990 Ettela'at reported similar executions in Ahar. Another shocking incident was reported by the official Ressalat daily on 17 February 1990: "The severed heads of two of the criminals were held aloft by the officers of the law for the public to see, and then placed on top of Avicenna's tomb (the city's most important tourist site). The three corpses were suspended from cranes and paraded through the city."

13. Such incidents, which frequently take place in different towns and cities and occasionally involve the execution of dozens of people en masse, create many feelings of hatred, fear, defencelessness and instability in children.

14. The International Falcon Movement - Socialist Educational International also notes that as a result of the policies of the Islamic Republic of Iran, 20 million people live below the poverty line and 3.2 people live in destitution; the primary victims of such poverty are children. As a result of this situation, some reports indicate that some families are forced to sell their children in return for food or drugs, and some young girls have been forced into prostitution. Other reports describe the appalling condition of children living in shanty towns with their mothers, who engage in prostitution in these same areas as a means of survival.

15. There are also reports of widespread addiction throughout the country, which is a direct consequence of the Government's policies. These victims of addiction include very young children. Such unbearable pressures have led many family members to commit suicide or to kill their own children. Other despondent parents who were unable to obtain milk for their infants have abandoned their children in public places. Homelessness is common, and many people live in tents and in cemeteries. These appalling incidents are so widespread that in many cases they are reported by the official press.

16. The International Falcon Movement - Socialist Educational International expresses its abhorrence at the continuation of internal repression and terrorism abroad by the Islamic Republic, including the assassination of freedom-loving, human rights activities in exile. Such repressive measures have escalated, particularly in the wake of the publication of the Special Representative's report after his first visit to Iran. These terrorist activities culminated in the assassination in Geneva of Professor Kazem Rajavi.

17. We pay tribute to Professor Rajavi, who had served as Iran's ambassador to the United Nations and subsequently became the representative of the Iranian resistance in that same forum. He was a renowned human rights activist, highly respected in international forums. Professor Rajavi, a former school teacher who had worked extensively with children, always endeavoured to defend and protect the rights of Iranian children. Investigations carried out by the Swiss police clearly established the role of the Islamic Republic and its Embassy in Switzerland in this horrendous crime.

18. The International Falcon Movement - Socialist Educational International profoundly regrets the fact that the report prepared by the Special Representative of the United Nation's Commission on Human Rights after his second trip to Iran fails to reflect the true picture of the grave and appalling violations of basic human rights.

19. The Special Representative has corrected, to some extent, the errors of his earlier report, and has taken note of numerous issues concerning human rights violations in Iran. With the exception of two short paragraphs, however, noting nine years as the marital age for girls and the legality of physical punishment of children, his report essentially fails to tackle genuinely and comprehensively the sitation of children in Iran.

20. The International Falcon Movement - Socialist Educational International urges the United Nations Commission on Human Rights to condemn the continuing violation of human rights by the Iranian régime. In saluting Professor Kazem Rajavi's valuable efforts in defence of human rights, the Movement strongly condemns his assassination.